

Raju paints without brush

Raju Paints without brush.

Raju was a clumsy boy. He liked to paint no doubt. But always used to spill water from the bowl, smudge the floor, spoil his hands and clothes.

Which mother would tolerate such things? 'No more painting' said his mother.

Mohan felt sorry for Raju. He showed him his box of oil pastels.

No water, no brush, no spilling and smudging.

Just pick the pastels from the box and start drawing — what a range of colours!

Parrot green, Lobster orange, Peacock blue, Sunflower yellow and many many more.

Now Raju's mother too has bought him a box of oil pastels.



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Hurkadli, Bijapur. Biswajee Mishra, Kunjakanta. Deepak L. Rao, Hyderabad-500 007. M.Gouse, Bapatla.
S.Sreenivasan, Guntur.

NEXT ISSUE

- * *The Spectre of War Looms Large—in the Story of Krishna*
- * *The Maiden who became a River—in Rivers of India*
- * *The Prince and the Holy Man—A Legend of India*
- * *Adventures of Prince Ajib—An Arabian Night Story*
- * *Underwater Sharpshooters*
- * *And all the features like Newsflash, Let Us Know, Laugh with Nasruddin and a bunch of delightful stories!*

Thoughts to be Treasured

"The sun of India's destiny would rise and fill all India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world."

Sri Aurobindo

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CHANDAMAMA

Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

Founder: CHAKRAPANI

STORY OF INDIA

This series began in the issue of January 1977. In ninetyfour chapters so far, it has unfolded the great past of India, beginning with the mythological times.

Innumerable are the legends and episodes, spreading into a remote time, that go to make the Indian heritage. We chose only some of them, but chose with a purpose—to give you glimpses of the various aspects of the vast past of the country.

The series has now reached the twentieth century. Events in this century are well known. Your magazine too has given you several separate features on India's struggle for freedom. Nevertheless, we cover the episode in brief in this issue and conclude the *Story of India*.

In subsequent issues the section will be devoted to different aspects of India, each one an independent feature, through pictures.



यस्त्वबिज्ञानवान्भवत्ययुक्तेन मनसा सदा ।

तस्येन्द्रियाण्यवस्थानि दुष्टाश्वा इव सारथेः ॥

Yastvavijñānavānbhavatyayuktena manasā sadā

Tasyendriyāṇyavaśyāni duṣṭāśvā iva sārathēḥ

One who has no understanding and whose mind is ever unrestrained — his senses behave as vicious horses do towards their charioteer.

— *The Kathopaniṣad*



LET US KNOW

When was Delhi founded?

—Rupin Dang, Darjeeling.

In India can be found the largest number of towns and cities with a continuity dating back to centuries. Delhi is one of them. The modern Delhi is believed to be standing on the site which was known as Indraprastha, founded by the Pandavas. An area of Delhi is still called Indrapat.

History tells us that King Anangapal built a new town over the old in the A.D. 11th century. His fort lay where the Qutb Minar is to be seen today.

In 12th century Delhi was ruled by the Chauhan kings who too built many monuments and Delhi gained greater importance.

Which is the tallest statue in the world?

—R. Rajesh, Sriharikota.

The statue named *the Motherland* that stands on a hillock near Volgograd in the U.S.S.R. It is 270 feet high from its base to the tip of the sword the figure holds.

Which continent is the smallest in the world?

—M. Nalla, Koraput.

The Australian continent.

Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.

Do You Know?

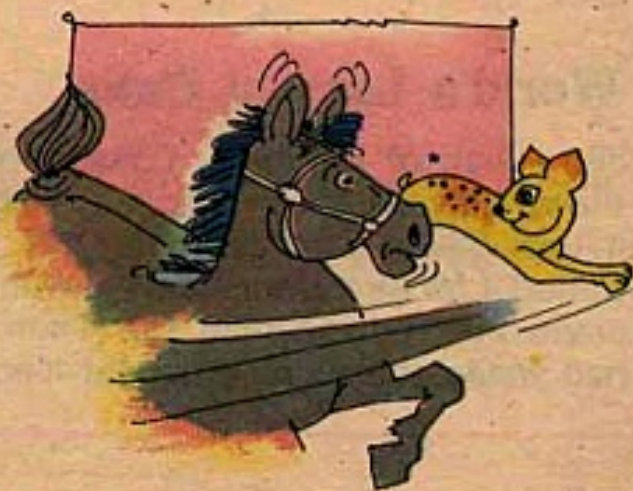
James A. Garfield, 20th President of the United States of America, could write simultaneously with both his hands—and two different languages—Greek and Latin.



Deer botfly, a tiny insect, is the speed champion of the world. It flies at a speed of 1,317 kilometres per hour—faster than a jet plane!



Emperor Jahangir (17th century) of India was the owner of the greatest number of jewels. He owned a total of 2,235,600 carats of pearls, 931,500 carats of emeralds, 376,600 carats of rubies, 279,450 carats of diamonds and 186,300 carats of jade.



Gazelle, the small African antelope, begins to run within an hour of its birth. A two-day old gazelle can race with a full-grown horse and outdo it!

The largest creature known was not the ancient dinosaur which has disappeared, but a creature alive. He is the blue whale. It can be 120 feet long, weighing 120 tons!



NEWS-FLASH



Centenary of Our First President

1984 is the birth centenary year of Babu Rajendra Prasad, the first President of the Republic of India, born in Bihar in 1884. He gave up his roaring practice as a lawyer in order to participate in India's fight for freedom. He was the President of Indian National Congress thrice. In 1950 he became the President of India and was re-elected to the office in 1952 and 1957. He retired in 1962 and died soon thereafter. Wisdom and humility, patience and patriotism marked his character.

World's Largest Cake

Jim Hilton of Highgate, Canada, has produced the world's largest cake so far. Weighing 400 Kg, it was baked in a cement-mixer. A helicopter turned it for its all-round baking with the help of a crane. 2000 people ate it. Mr. Hilton, to his credit, had made the world's largest icecream earlier.



Beginning of Learning

When did you begin to learn? Of course, years before you went to school—you will say. But the US scientists say, according to a report in *Science*, that the learning begins while the baby is in its mother's womb. We need not be surprised, for the Mahabharata says that Abhimanyu learnt the secrets of warfare before his birth by listening to his father Arjuna describing them to his mother, Subhadra.

(The link: Yudhisthira was declared the King of kings in a great festival held at their new capital, Indraprastha. The occasion was sanctified by Krishna's presence.)

THE MIRACLE OF GRACE

Who would believe that a dreaded wilderness shunned by travellers had been transformed into a charming city? Folksingers were all agog singing its glory, just as they were in their praise of the Pandavas, the founders of the city.

And every time Duryodhana heard of Indraprastha, he felt the pang of an arrow piercing

his breast. The pomp and show amidst which Yudhisthira was acclaimed the emperor, the death of Sishupala in the hands of Krishna, were memories already too hard for Duryodhana to forget. But the continuous rise of the Pandavas in the people's esteem consumed his heart with the fire of fierce jealousy.





He lost all interest in games, sports and the other amusements. He was often found remorseful.

"What ails you, dear?" asked the crooked and cunning Shakuni, his maternal uncle, while Duryodhana sat alone.

Duryodhana gazed at Shakuni. Here was a man hated by the elders. Nobody would befriend him because he was terribly wicked.

But Duryodhana suddenly felt attracted towards him. Why not put to their proper use the mischief that glittered in his eyes, the venom that he seemed to breathe?

Duryodhana bared his heart before Shakuni. "I am so painfully consumed by envy that I feel like committing suicide," he confessed.

Shakuni laughed. "I understand your anguish," he said, "But don't worry. I know how to humiliate the proud Pandavas. It is not by war or rivalry, but by exploiting a singular weakness of Yudhisthira."

"What is that?"

"His fascination for playing dice at which he has hardly any talent. And if you pardon my saying so, I am..."

"The player non-pareil!" exclaimed Duryodhana. "And you can play on my behalf!" he added, clapping his hands.

It was an exciting idea for Duryodhana. He embraced Shakuni.

Although for all practical purposes Duryodhana was the ruler, the word of his blind old father, King Dhritarashtra, was still the last writ on any issue. As long as Dhritarashtra was guided by his wise minister, Vidura, he took no wrong decision. But Shakuni and Duryodhana managed to get the king's sanction for challenging Yudhisthira to a game of dice. Vidura was not consulted

in the matter, though the king sent him to summon Yudhisthira to Hastinapura for the purpose.

A grand hall was hurriedly erected for the contest. Yudhisthira suspected foul play, but as a principle he never shrank away from a challenge.

The game began in the presence of a large number of princes and members of the nobility. Yudhisthira, who had been told that it will be a game between he and Duryodhana, was surprised to see Shakuni confronting him instead of Duryodhana. He did not like the idea of playing with a proxy, but gentle as he was, he did not make it an issue.

For the first round of the game Yudhisthira pledged his necklace that contained a rare jewel. He was to lose it if defeated. Duryodhana pledged a large number of jewels to match it.

The first die was thrown by Shakuni. "I have won!" the villain shouted. The Kauravas and their friends broke into a thunderous applause. Yudhisthira understood that Shakuni won through deception, but he could not prove it.



Shakuni kept on scoring victory after victory; Yudhisthira kept on losing to Duryodhana one after another of his possessions. Tension mounted as Yudhisthira even lost his throne. But the contest did not end there. He pledged his brothers one after another and lost them. Then he pledged himself and lost himself too! That meant all the Pandavas had become slaves of the Kauravas.

What was left with Yudhisthira for him to pledge? He wondered. "Why don't you pledge Draupadi?" someone suggested in a whisper. "Why



not!" responded Yudhishthira. It is difficult to say whether the mind of the wise prince had been totally clouded when he yielded to such a suggestion, or, like a seer, he could see that this will bring about the destruction of the lusty Kauravas!

As anticipated, he lost in this last game too. Duryodhana and his brothers danced in joy. Their wild laughter sounded like the howl of jackals. "Now that Draupadi is a slave of ours, go and fetch her into this arena!" Duryodhana ordered his younger brother, Duhshasana.

Duhshasana rushed into the palace and caught hold of

Draupadi by her hair.

"Spare me, please!" cried Draupadi, but to no avail. Duhshasana soon led her into the court..

"I understand that Yudhishthira had lost himself to the Kauravas before pledging me. Once he had become a slave himself, what right had he to pledge me? I demand justice from the elders!" shouted Draupadi.

But the elders kept quiet. The Kauravas argued that once Yudhishthira himself became a slave, all he possessed became the property of his masters. In other words Draupadi had become a slave of the Kauravas even before she was pledged by Yudhishthira.

Thereafter there was no argument. Dhushasana bared his teeth and caught an edge of Draupadi's saree and began pull to it. That day hell itself had been let loose in the Kaurava court! Everybody's conscience had been sealed, for nobody protested against Duhshasana's action!

Bhima and Arjuna were grinding their teeth with awful anger and agony. They would have pounced upon Duhshasana

had Yudhisthira not stopped them.

But why did Yudhisthira stop them? Did he foresee the miracle that was going to take place? We do not know...

It took some time for the courtiers to realise what a miracle was on—silently!

When Draupadi understood that no human help was forthcoming, she suddenly turned to Vishnu. Her heart-cried out, as she threw up her hands in despair with a prayer, saying, "O Lord, Thou alone can come to my rescue!"

While the Kauravas were gleefully looking forward to her final humiliation, she was having a profound experience. She saw in her vision Krishna holding out his Sudarshana Chakra out of which flowed an unending stream of light that clothed her. Nobody else could see that divine sight, but all saw the result of that miracle. Duhshasana kept pulling Draupadi's saree, but it never came to an end! His smile changed into a grin. Soon the grin too disappeared. He looked pale. He tried to speed up, but his hands were tired. The spectators sat speechless. Then there were



murmurs expressing their surprise at the strange happening.

While Draupadi looked serene and glorious, protected by the Divine Grace, forgetful of what was going on, Duhshasana looked helpless and pitiable. Suddenly he gave up and sat down, humiliation writ large on his face.

News had reached the blind king Dhritarashtra about the drama in the court. Despite his indulgence towards his sons, he found their conduct extremely despicable. At once he cried a halt to the scene. He chided Duryodhana and asked Draupadi what boons she would like to

have of him. Draupadi sought the freedom of the Pandavas. The old king ruled that the game and all its consequences were null and void. The Pandavas must be allowed to return to Indraprastha honourably along with Draupadi.

But the event was bound to have its far-reaching consequences. Draupadi was no ordinary soul, but a spirit with an extraordinary mission. She had emerged from a Yajna—and that is why she was called Yajnaseni—and her curse could do havoc!

She had been won by Arjuna. But when the Pandava brothers informed their mother, Kunti, that they had won a valuable prize, the mother, without knowing what it was, said that let all the five brothers possess the prize! Thus Draupadi became

the wife of all the brothers, but, Providence had greater reasons for bringing about this arrangement. Draupadi had the unique power to look upon all the five Pandavas as one. It is because the five heroes had become one under her influence that they were to prove more than a match for the Kauravas. Destruction of the Kauravas had become a necessity. Left free, they would have destroyed all that was good and civilized on the earth. They incarnated such evil powers!

When Duhshasana dragged Draupadi by her hair, she resolved that she will not do her hair until they had been washed in the blood of those sinners!

When Bhima saw her humiliation, he resolved that he will not rest until he had torn apart the breasts of the Kauravas!

—To Continue



The Second Door

Some Friends asked Mulla Nasruddin to entertain them at his home. "Come with me!" said the Mulla and led them home.



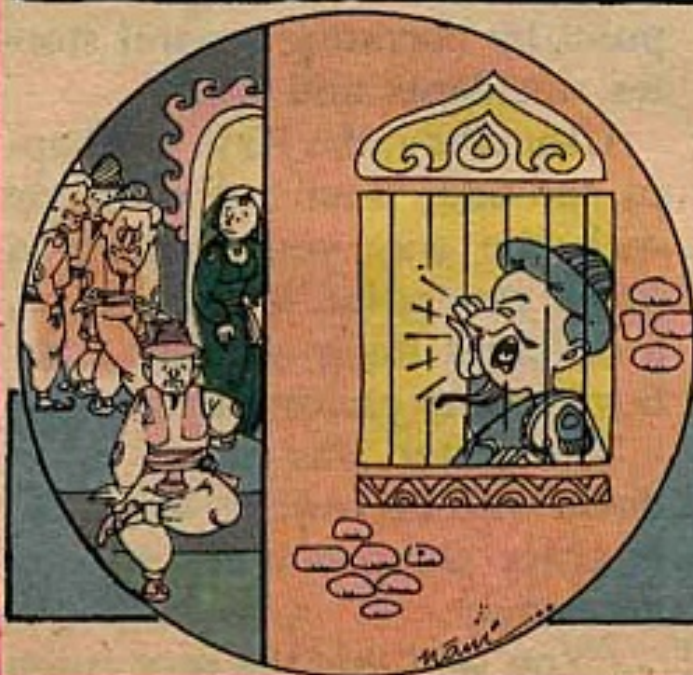
While the guests waited in the verandah he entered the house and learnt that there was no food. "Tell them that I am not at home!" he advised his wife.



When the lady said this to the guests, they said, "He just entered the house and we never saw him going out!" The lady had no answer.



The Mulla shouted from his room, "Gentlemen, this house has two doors. I must have gone out by the other door!"





THE JESTER'S REWARD

The Raja of Chandanpur was eager to know the reasons for man's sorrows and unhappiness. He asked his minister if he could throw any light on the question. The minister suggested that this question be put to the wisemen of the town.

Accordingly, the wisemen were called to the Raja's court.

Some said that the root cause of all sorrows is man's own ego; others said it is his desire; yet others said it is man's ignorance. The Raja was not very happy with their answers.

"I want a very practical answer," he said.

The jester came forward and said that he had the true answer to the Raja's question. "I am not quite willing to give the answer, as the reward you have

fixed is too small," he said.

The Raja who had fixed a reward of one thousand rupees doubled the amount, saying, "I will give you two thousand rupees if I am pleased by your answer."

"The root cause of all sorrows is money," said the jester. Then, he went on to prove his point by narrating several stories, incidents and facts.

Ultimately, the Raja was happy and said, "I am indeed happy with the way you've tried to prove your point. It is, however, a different thing whether I believe in your philosophy or not."

The jester was about to sit down with his reward, when the minister stopped him and said accusingly:

"You said that the root cause

of all problems is money. Then, why have you asked for more money from the Raja? You don't seem to be believing in your own philosophy!"

The jester did not get disturbed. He answered back in a philosophical tone: "That is the nature of man. Knowing very well that money is the root cause of all his problems, man still wants it."

The minister was annoyed further by this tone of the answer. "You are surely a very ignorant and foolish man, if you believe so," retorted the minister.

"Sir, do you think you are immortal?" asked the jester, apparently without any connection with the topic in discussion.

"No. Every man is mortal," replied the minister, slightly composing himself.

"Sir, knowing yourself to be mortal, are you ready to die tomorrow?" asked the jester.

"What a silly question! Who would want to die tomorrow or the next day? Everyone wants to live as long as possible," the minister defended himself.

"Sir, you believe in one thing and at the same time aren't you wanting to do just the contrary? Similarly, I believe that money is the root cause of all troubles and yet I desire it because it is needed for life," explained the jester.

The people around understood the jester's point and they all gave a laugh. The minister kept a sullen face.

The Raja, who was listening to all this conversation, was very happy with the jester's wisdom and offered him a bonus of a thousand rupees more!



AN INTERVIEW

It was an interview for the selection of a bodyguard for the king. Four able-bodied men faced the minister, all eager to get the much coveted job.

"Supposing the king was taking an evening walk in his garden and suddenly a stranger were to leap from behind a bush and wound him with a dagger. If you people were around the king, what would you have done in such a situation?" asked the minister.

"I would have beheaded the stranger with my sword," said the first candidate.

"I would have taken away his knife and thrown him to the ground," said the second one.

"I would have stood between the king and the stranger and sacrificed my life for the king," said the third applicant.

"With me guarding the king vigilantly no stranger would ever dare to come near the king," said the fourth man, with all the pride of a confident body-guard. "Even if he came, there is no question of his inflicting any wound on the king's person."

Obviously, the fourth one was recruited for the job.



Treasure Island

Jim Hawkins and his friends, Squire Trelawney and Dr. Livesey, have reached the desert island where a large pirate treasure trove is buried. Now, almost within sight of the treasure at last, they have a new problem to face. Most of the crew, led by the cook, Long John Silver, are planning a mutiny in order that they may have the treasure for themselves.



Tom had no time to recover. Silver, agile as a monkey, even without a leg or crutch, was on top of him the next moment and had twice buried his knife in that defenceless body.



The sight was such that I fainted upon the spot. When I came again to myself, the monster had pulled himself together. Just before him Tom lay motionless. Everything else was unchanged, the sun still shining mercilessly on everything. I could scarce persuade myself that murder had been done and a human life cut cruelly short.

As soon as Silver was gone, I fled wildly into the undergrowth, until I was brought suddenly to a halt by the sight of a strange apparition bounding through the trees.





Silver himself appeared less terrible than this creature of the woods. The figure flitted like a deer, running man-like on two legs, stooping almost double as it moved. Suddenly it turned and came towards me and I saw that it was a man.

He hesitated, and then to my wonder and confusion he threw himself on his knees and held out his clasped hands in supplication. "Who are you?" I asked. "Ben Gunn," he answered, "I'm poor Ben Gunn, I am, and I haven't spoken to a Christian these three years."



"Three years!" I cried, "Were you shipwrecked?" "Nay, mate," said he, "I was marooned."

I knew this stood for some kind of punishment common enough among buccaneers in which the offender is left on some desolate island. "Never mind," Ben Gunn continued, "I've lived rough, but for all that I'm rich." He grasped my arm. "Rich! Rich!"

I settled myself down beside Ben while he told his story. "I was on the pirate Flint's ship when he buried his treasure here," Ben said. "But only Flint returned. He killed them all, Jim." "But how did you come to be marooned on this island, Ben?" I asked.



"I was in another ship three years later, Ben said, "and we sighted this island. "Boys," said I, "Here's Flint's Treasure. Let's find it." Twelve days we looked without luck. 'Ben Gunn,' they said, 'You've wasted our time. So we'll leave you to find Flint's treasure yourself.' And here I've been ever since."



Suddenly the island awoke to the sound of cannon. "They have begun to fight," I cried. "Follow me," With that I ran off blindly with Ben at my side. I have no idea for how long we ran until, without warning, we came in sight of a large wooden stockade, presumably built by the pirate Flint.



It was at that precise moment that a cannon ball came tearing through the trees and pitched into the ground not so many yards from where we were standing.



Ben ran in one direction and I in the other. This time my fleeing steps took me to the anchorage where the Hispaniola still lay. But now she was flying the Jolly Roger. Even as I looked there was another flash and another report from the ship. It was as it turned out, the last of the cannonade.

The cannonade told me that at least the squire and Doctor Livesey were alive. Not knowing what to do next I retraced my steps to the stockade, where a welcome surprise awaited me.....



How they had come to be there was simply told by the Squire. The Doctor, it seemed, had gone ashore and discovered the stockade. Returning, he had persuaded the Squire and the Captain that the stockade was the best place for them to defend themselves against Silver's men. They had set off with the Squire's three servants, some provisions and a sailor named Gray. Pursued by cannon fire from the ship they had made their way to the stockade.

—To Continue

The Greatest Companion

A lone traveller was on the way to a distant town. He looked for at least one companion, but got none.

As he passed by an inn, he saw an old man seated on the verandah. "What is your destination?" the traveller asked the old man. The old man told him his destination which was situated in the direction opposite to the traveller's destination.

The traveller sighed with disappointment.

"Why do you look so pen-

sive?" asked the old man.

"I would have been happy to get a companion. I am afraid of rogues and bandits on the way," replied the traveller.

The old man laughed. "I am old and weak," he said. "Yet I am alone on my long journey, without the least fear. Why should you fear danger?"

"I am truly surprised," said the traveller. "How do you dare to take the risk of long journey?"

"I derive my courage from the Lord. He is with me. He can be





also with you if you depend on Him. Who can be a better companion than He?" asked the old man.

"Will He save me from rogues?"

"He will, if you pray to Him with complete trust in Him."

The old man's words gave the traveller courage. He saluted him and resumed walking.

He kept thinking of God and praying to Him. He felt happy and did not feel the need for any companion.

It was late in the afternoon. The traveller was passing by a hill when suddenly someone sprang up before him. The fel-

low held a dagger. A look at him told the traveller that the fellow was a rogue of the most vicious kind.

The traveller quietly took out his purse and handed it over to the fellow.

"Get ready to die!" said the rogue.

"Must you kill me even though I have given you all the money I had?" asked the traveller, quite surprised.

"I must kill you, because I have not killed anybody since day before yesterday and if I let you pass, I may not see another traveller today!"

"For Heaven's sake, man, I have done nothing to deserve death in your hand. If you suspect that I have still something valuable with me, you can search me," said the traveller.

"I'll search you after killing you. There is no use pleading with me for your life. If you have any other wish, you can tell me," said the rogue, proud that he had the power to do whatever he liked with the helpless traveller.

The traveller understood that he had fallen into the hands of a rogue who was possessed by the devil. The fellow murdered for

sake of murder!

"Any last wish?" asked the rogue once again.

"Yes. I'll like to drink some water. I do not wish to die thirsty."

"The river is just here. Come on!" said the rogue and he made the traveller walk ahead of him.

The traveller did not lose his faith in God. But he asked Him silently, "How are you going to save me? Neyer mind if you cannot. But kindly see to it that I do not suffer while dying!"

The two reached the river. The traveller stooped and drank from it. Then he lay down, his eyes closed. He was sure that there was no chance for God to save him. He had no strength or

the skill to fight. Not a soul was around who could come to his rescue.

The rogue sat crouching, his back towards the river. He raised his dagger to finish off the poor traveller.

But he had no time to bring the dagger down. A crocodile that had stealthily crawled up snapped him up and rushed back into the river.

The traveller opened his eyes and sat up when he heard the splash. He saw the crocodile diving with the rogue clamped between his jaws.

He thanked God and said, "Indeed, my Lord, you are the greatest companion! No situation is beyond your control; it is never too late for you!"



Hanged Thrice and Yet Alive!

It was a winter night of 1863. The city of Sydney was all asleep. Suddenly a big noise was heard outside a bank. A constable on the night beat was being attacked by three robbers who had stolen a bag of gold and silver coins. By the time help arrived, the thieves had escaped leaving behind a dead constable.

After a thorough combing of the area, the police of Sydney, Australia, arrested Joseph Samuels. Some of the stolen

coins were found in his pocket. He was a man already on their black-list. They charged him with the murder of the constable and promptly put him behind bars.

By the time he was produced before the criminal court judge, Joseph Samuels was a subdued man and confessed, under police threat, his guilt. He was sentenced to be hanged.

In the meanwhile, the police had arrested Isaac Simmonds, an accomplice of Joseph



Samuels. As it was difficult to get any confession out of him, the police chief thought of frightening him into confession, by making him witness the cruel death of his colleague, Joseph Samuels.

So, on the morning of the execution, Samuels stood up on the death-cart and delivered a short speech. He narrated the whole incident of the robbery of the bank and also the events that led to the murder of the constable. He finished his speech with the sentence, "The actual murderer is standing in front of me!"

The spectators were startled

and stared at Isaac Simmonds. They shouted that he should be in the hangman's noose instead of Samuels. But, the guards managed to hold back the crowd, and the noose was fastened round the condemned man's neck. Then the hangman drove the death-cart, leaving Samuels to dangle and die.

Nothing happened.

Joseph Samuels dangled for a second and then fell flat on his face! The rope had given away. The hangman quickly arranged for a new rope and the magistrate ordered the hanging for a second time.

This time, the rope began to



unwind, strand by strand, and Samuels again fell on the ground without the noose suffocating him to death. The spectators became still more restless and shouted, "Release him! It is God's will that he should be saved!"

For the third time Samuels was being hung on a new rope. And for the third time he fell on his face, the rope having snapped this time just over his head!

The incident was reported to the Governor. He issued a reprieve. Joseph Samuels was free.

A thorough examination of the rope showed no sign of any

tampering with it. On the contrary, it was found that the rope was capable of bearing the weight of three hundred and ninety pounds hung from it. Even a single strand of the rope could have normally held that weight. Yet, the rope had broken thrice under the weight of Joseph Samuels!

After Samuels was set free, the trial reopened and it was proved that Isaac Simmonds was the murderer!

Thrice Samuels was hanged and thrice saved! What strange powers intervene in the affairs of man—sometimes!



A COWARD CONQUERS

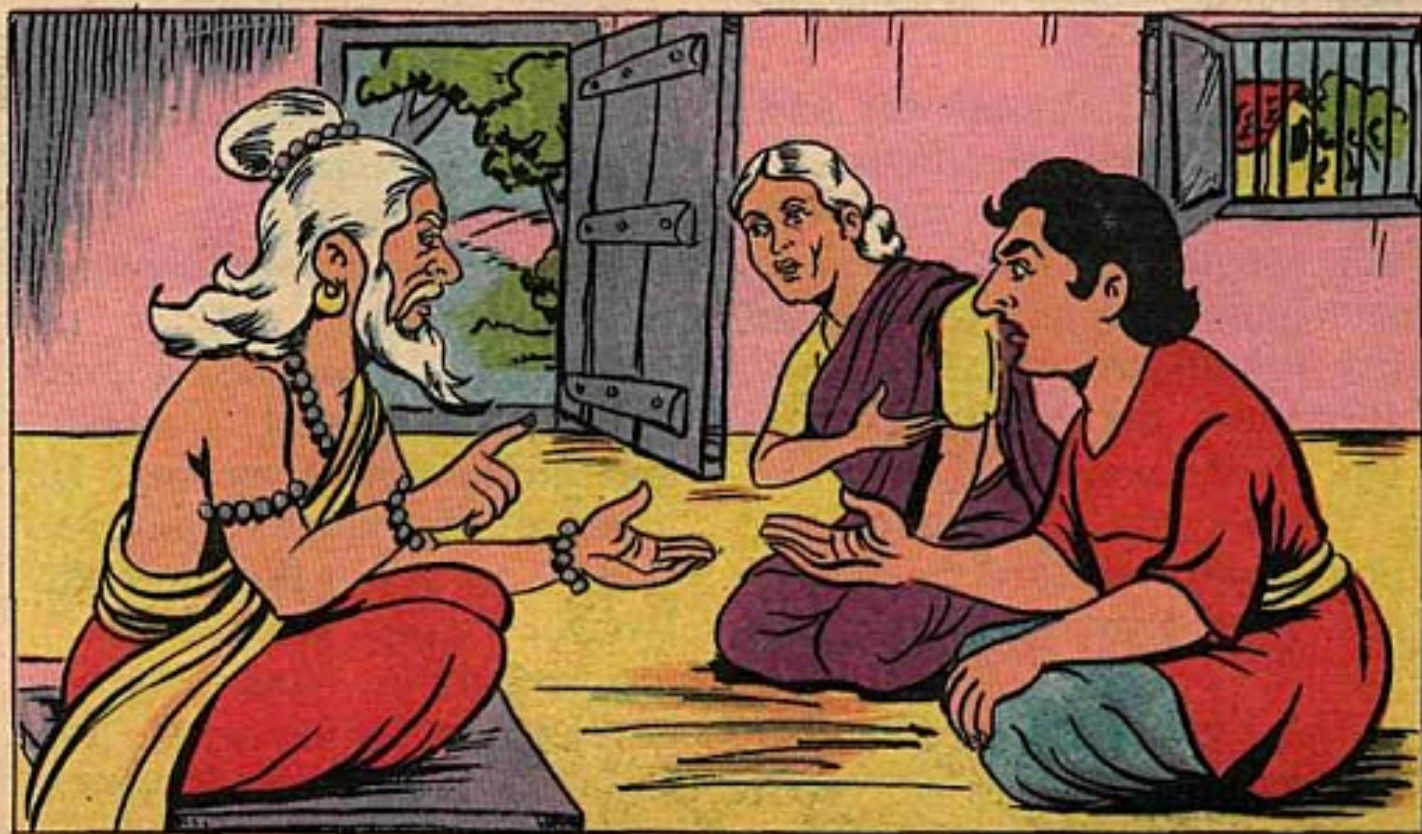
Prasad was a young boy who lived in the kingdom of Malwa. Unfortunately he had lost both his parents at a very young age. So he lived with his poor granny.

The granny was very unhappy with Prasad because he was an absolute coward—he often shrieked on seeing his own shadow! Not only he, but his pets also turned into poltroons. His lovely cat, all fat and healthy, used to run for its life on seeing rats!

One day, a yogi, who was on a visit to their house, observed the strange phenomenon of the cat running away at the sight of a rodent, and he became inquisitive. The granny told him all about Prasad. "Whichever creature is touched by him it turns into a coward," concluded the granny.

The yogi took Prasad's hand and studied his palm.

"Your grandchild is indeed a strange boy. But do not worry. His peculiar powers are meant





to achieve some specific and noble purpose. Do not blame him. Let him live as he wants," said the yogi before leaving the house.

One day as Prasad was passing by the zamindar's house, he saw his lovely white dog. The dog too took a liking for him and came near him wagging its tail. Prasad stroked it with love. Just then, the zamindar came out of the house.

"Don't you dare touch my dog, nitwit!" scolded the zamindar. Prasad got frightened and ran off.

The zamindar took the dog, went inside his house and called

out to his old watchman. The watchman appeared before him holding a stick with two other servants of the house. As soon as the dog saw them, it jerked itself free from the zamindar's hands, and ran and ran, until it was yards away from the house.

The zamindar could not understand this strange behaviour of his dog. "All these days it had been so fond of the watchman and the servants—and now, why did it run away in fear?" wondered the zamindar, "Surely, Prasad must have done something to it. I shall not let him go free."

So, the zamindar filed a complaint in the court of law.

Next day, the judge called both the parties, and before beginning the case, he approached Prasad:

"My son," asked the judge, "have you really done any harm to the zamindar's dog?"

"No, Sir! I only patted it out of love," said Prasad innocently, and broke down weeping. He touched the judge's feet and said, "I am telling the truth, Sir. I haven't done it any harm."

Some strange thing happened to the judge. He muttered, "No, no. I cannot give any judgment

today." He walked away from the court-hall. What he did not say was that he was suddenly overcome by fear!

The zamindar, who now suspected that Prasad had some weird power to infuse fear into others, informed the minister about it. The minister became inquisitive and ordered Prasad to be brought to him.

When Prasad reached the house of the minister, he was in the company of a wrestler. The wrestler was renowned all over the kingdom for his strength, and courage. Prasad was awestruck by the wrestler's muscular body. He went to him and paid him respects by touching his feet. No

sooner had Prasad touched his feet, than the wrestler began to run away from the hall. The minister ordered his guards to bring him back. They brought him back with great difficulty.

"What has happened to you?" asked an annoyed minister. "Why are you running away as if chased by a ghost?"

The wrestler made no reply. He tried to slip away once again and this time he succeeded.

The minister got confirmed about Prasad's strange quality! Soon the king, Jitendra Varma, was informed about it. He was alarmed.

"If this youngling goes around my kingdom turning everyone





into poltroons, then I shall lose all my able men. Put the chap to death!" the king ordered.

Prasad's granny went to the minister and implored:

"Sir, Prasad is my only grandchild. I have no one else to look after me. Where shall I go at this old age, if he is killed? Have mercy and save us."

The minister felt pity for the old lady. He requested the king to give Prasad a month's time. His request was granted.

Twenty seven days passed. Nothing could be thought of to save Prasad. But, on the twenty-eighth day news reached the king that his formidable neigh-

bouring king Pratapsen had plans to attack his kingdom. The enemy was in fact standing on the borders of his kingdom. The king was all panic because he knew that he was no match for Pratapsen and a fight meant his sure defeat.

"Maharaja, let us not lose courage and hope. I have a plan." So saying the minister whispered his plan to the king.

The two armies came to the battlefield—it was like a sparrow challenging a hawk. Lest his army gets nervous and panicky, king Jitendra kept it behind a hillock from where the enemy was not visible.

Before the battle began, the minister called Prasad and commanded:

"Here is a letter for king Pratapsen. You must give it in his hand. If you return without doing this errand, you will surely die."

Prasad walked straight into the enemy camp with a white flag in one hand and the letter in the other. Pratapsen received him with a smile, thinking, "This must be an offer of surrender. King Jitendra must have got frightened on seeing my huge army."

But, when he went through the letter he became furious. The letter contained only abuses and accusations. He roared at his officers and ordered: "Behead this fellow right away. How dare he bring me such a letter!"

"Maharaja! I do not even know the content of the letter. I only did what I was asked to do by the minister. Save my life, Maharaja!" So pleading Prasad fell on the king's feet.

And lo! the unexpected happened. The formidable Pratapsen became pale and nervous. He told his chief of the army in a shaking voice:

"Return to our kingdom. It was a mistake to attack this

kingdom. Quick! make arrangements to retreat."

As Pratapsen started withdrawing, king Jitendra attacked it with his own army. The demoralised and panicked enemy was routed. King Jitendra now ruled over the vast neighbouring kingdom too!

After this last act, the strange powers of Prasad also withdrew. However, king Jitendra compensated him well by making him an officer in his army. Prasad was now called, Veer Prasad, for indeed Prasad had shed off all his cowardice and become a real hero.

The yogi's prophecy that Prasad would accomplish some worthwhile purpose came true.



A Line of Prehistoric Reptiles

Living reminders of the reptiles of prehistoric times are the crocodiles, those fearsome predators of the tropics whose days are spent sleeping peacefully on the river bank

Swamps, dark silent pools, rivers and waterways that meander through the forests and jungles of tropic countries are the homes of the crocodiles and alligators—the giants of the reptile world. These huge creatures remind us more of the reptiles of prehistoric times than do any other creatures in the world today.

Of these two, the larger is the crocodile, which lives in Africa, Southern Asia, tropical Australia, Central America and the West Indies. It is a fearsome creature, appearing particularly so when it is basking on a mud bank, its stumpy legs straddled out on either side and its huge jaws agape, displaying a forbidding array of sharp, pointed teeth.

This is the crocodile's favourite way of passing the day. It will doze off in the sun for hours at a time. But if a sound disturbs it, it will rush into the water and disappear from sight.

Minutes later, the tip of its snout and its eyes will be seen just above the surface, watching for prey.

In the evening, the crocodile is wide awake, for this is its hunting time. It moves through the water, swimming close to the bank and keeping a sharp look out for wading birds and thirsty jungle creatures that have come to the water for a drink.

As they stoop to drink, the crocodile opens its jaws and another meal begins the journey to its stomach. The victim is first drowned and then

carried to the crocodile's cave in the bank of the river.

Apart from man and his gun and the hippopotamus with its cavernous jaws, the crocodile is remarkably free of enemies.

This is not surprising, because it is so strong



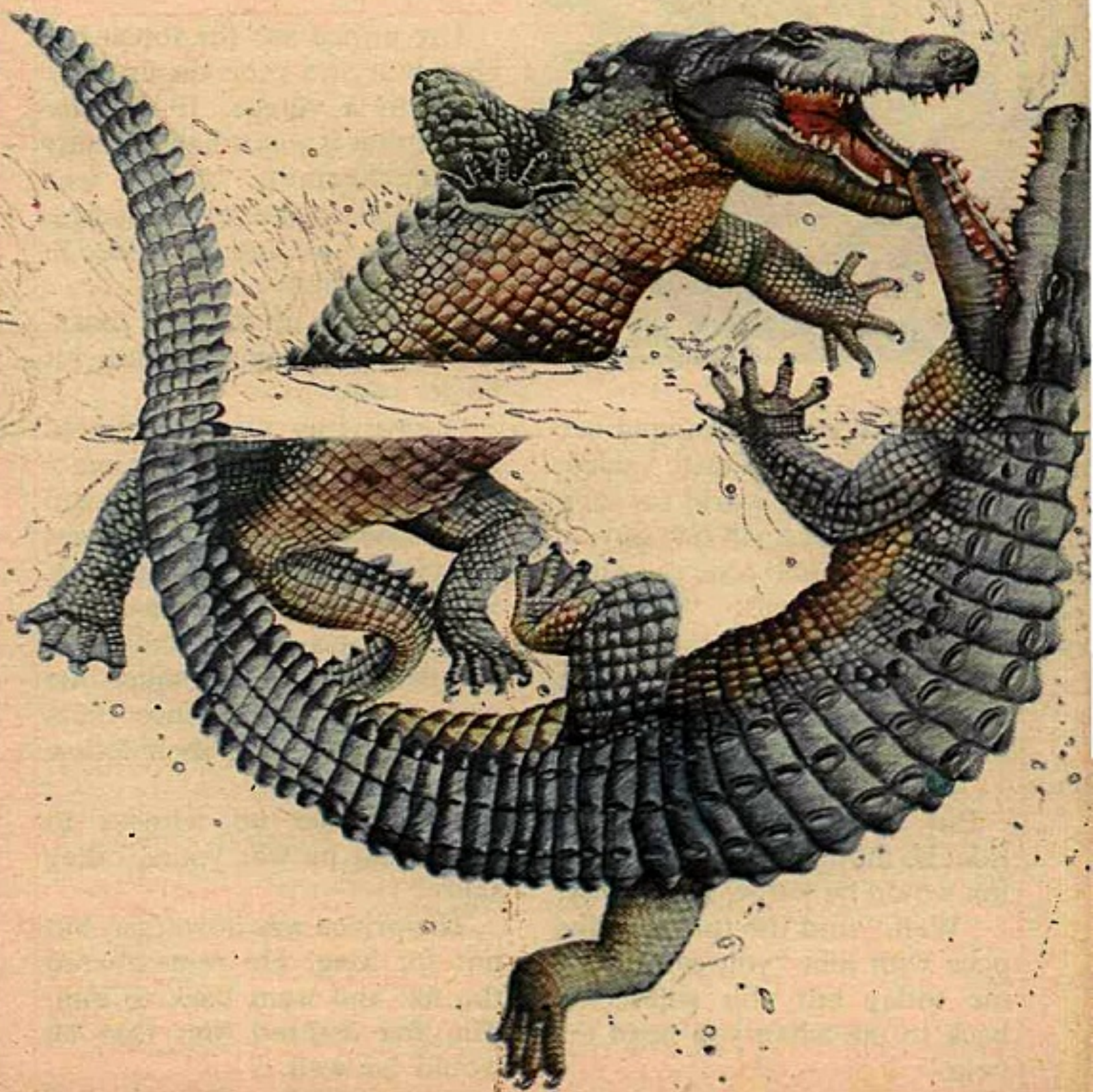
and so well protected against attacks that few animals risk a fight with it.

From its head to the tip of its tail, the crocodile is clad in a tough, leathery coat, while its back is shielded by an armour of hard, bony plates which defy the sharpest teeth and claws and are almost bullet-proof.

Safety Valves

Another factor which aids the crocodile's survival is its ability to remain almost completely under-water without drowning. This is because the nostrils are right at the end of the snout and their inner openings are far back in the mouth. At the back of the crocodile's mouth are two valves which can be closed to prevent water flowing down its throat when it submerges all but its nostrils.

At night, the crocodile travels long distances up and down the river in search of food. Its long tail serves as an efficient propeller which sends the animal swiftly through the water. With the dawn it heaves itself on to a bank and sleeps—until hunting time comes round again.





A Folktale

The Friendly Fox

The prince left the forest behind him and rode on until he came to a village. It so happened that it was inhabited only by washermen. As it was already dark, the prince tied his horse to a post and fell asleep in a nearby shed.

On waking up the next morning he saw a man leading his horse away.

"Leave him alone" shouted the prince, "he belongs to me."

"What do you mean?" asked the washerman. "The horse was born from my post this morning, therefore he belongs to me."

Soon there was a crowd of people and however much the prince tried to convince them they all sided with their fellow washerman.

"You have no witness to prove that he was yours," they said.

The prince was downcast, but not for long. He remembered the fox and went back to him. The fox assured him that all would be well.

There was once a young prince who wanted to taste adventure and see the world for himself. So, he set forth one day on his fine horse and rode out of his father's kingdom.

He had not gone very far when he entered a forest. From behind a thick cluster of trees a fox came out and said:

"Greetings, young prince."

But the prince continued to ride; he thought that talking to a fox would be below his dignity.

"Well," said the fox, keeping pace with him "you can ignore me today but you will come back to me when you need my help."

In a few days he fixed up a trial where the village elders were to settle the dispute.

The whole village gathered once again. The fox appeared along with the prince, but strangely enough his face was all black. As the trial began, the fox kept yawning loudly.

"What is the matter with you?" asked one of the old men. "Aren't you well?"

"Please forgive me," pleaded the fox. "I know it is very impolite. The fact is that I have spent the whole night at the ocean. There was such a fire there that it was difficult to put it off. You see my face is still black with the soot and the ash. Moreover, I have not slept well. How the water burned!"

At this there was great roar of laughter.

"Whoever heard of the ocean catching fire!" they shouted. "What an outright lie!"

"Fine. And whoever heard of a horse being born out of a post? What an outright lie!" countered the fox.

And with that the assembly broke up, seeing that they were up against an equally clever opponent. The horse was given back to the prince.

Riding back to the forest, the prince thanked the fox and apologised for not having greeted him when he had first met him.

"Never mind," said the fox. "Now you know that it is wise to be friendly with everyone."

—Retold by Sunayana Panda.



Before It Was Too Late!

Chand Sharma, our village physician, was once away in the town on as important a business as negotiating for his daughter's marriage. He met a fellow-villager by chance who informed him that the landlord of our area had suddenly taken ill.

The physician at once set out for the village. When he saw that the river was in spate and the ferryman was reluctant to ply the boat, he offered him ten times more his usual fare and crossed the river. Panting and sweating, he reached the landlord's house and gave him some medicine.

The villagers were much impressed. "How many physicians are there who would take such troubles for the sake of a patient?" they commented.

The physician's brother-in-law overheard the comments. He reported them to the physician at night. Said the physician with a meaningful smile, "Twice beforehand the landlord fell sick. But he recovered before I had a chance to give him any medicine. What could I do this time but rush to his bedside before it was too late?"





*New Tales of King
Vikram and the Vampire*

Was The Princess Timid?

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At intervals of thunderclaps could be heard moaning of jackals and eerie laughter of ghosts. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, I do not know who has influenced you to undertake this unusual activity at such an unearthly hour. It is not necessary that one should follow someone else's advice without questioning it. Let me tell you about the conflict between a young prince and his advisor. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: Long ago the Kingdom of Yashwantpur was ruled by Kuldip, a wise king. To his good luck, his



minister too was wise and intelligent. The king had great faith in him.

King Kuldip grew old. Also he became beset with an incurable sickness. It was clear to him that he would not live long.

He summoned the crown-prince, Ravichandra, into his bedroom. "My son," he told the prince, "It is time for me to depart. All my life I have worked to improve the lot of my subjects. I expect you to follow my ideal. I am leaving behind a great wealth for you. Do you know what it is? It is neither my kingdom nor my treasure, but my minister, Sukirti. As long as

his services are available to you, you are safe! Continue to be guided by him."

King Kuldip breathed his last the very next day.

According to the tradition, a new king was at liberty to choose a new minister. But the young king, Ravichandra, announced that he would be happy to retain Sukirti as his minister. His decision was applauded by the nobility.

One day the young king told the minister in confidence, "Our spies inform us that Jaipal, the king of our neighbouring state, Somagarh, is strengthening his army. Should we not attack his kingdom in a surprise move and cripple his army before he attacks us?"

The minister gave the proposal a thought and then said firmly, "My lord, it will not be right for us to invade Somagarh now."

"Why?" asked the young king.

"There is no reason for us to think that King Jaipal is preparing to attack our kingdom. If we attack his, it can be with only one purpose—to annex his kingdom. Well, what if we get defeated?"

The minister's argument did not sound quite satisfactory to the young king. But he remembered his father's instruction to be guided by the minister's advice and kept mum. He abandoned his plan to launch an offensive against Somagarh.

Soon after this, one morning, the king was starting on a hunting expedition. The minister walked up to him and said, "My lord, don't go out for the forest today."

The king's enthusiasm got dampened. He was not only astonished, but also annoyed. "Why not?" he asked, frowning.

"From the course of wind and the movement of clouds it appears that there will be heavy rain in two to three hours. You cannot find a place for taking shelter near the forest. Also, you cannot hunt while it rains!"

The king called off the expedition and went back into his palace.

But he summoned the old minister in the afternoon. "You stopped me from going out for hunting. But it did not rain, after all!"

"My lord, I must advise you on different matters according to the best of my ability. I may



not prove right on every occasion. However, though it did not rain here, it might have rained in the forest!" said the minister.

The king despatched two guards to the forest. They returned to report that there had been heavy rains in the forest. The river was in spate.

The king learnt to respect his minister's opinions.

Six months passed. One day the minister told the king in confidence, "My lord, Jaipal, the king of Somagarh, is planning to invade our kingdom. The spy who brought the intelligence is a trusted man."



"My dear minister, I was already suspicious of his motive and that is why I proposed to be on the offensive. You dissuaded me from taking any such step. Let us now prepare to attack Somagarh before their army strikes!"

"No, my lord, let us not go to war," said the minister.

"What!" exclaimed the king. "Do you suggest that we should allow our kingdom to become a colony of Somagarh?"

"Never, my lord. I have a quite different plan in my mind. King Jaipal has a charming daughter, Kanakasundari by name. She is as witty as she is

beautiful. If you have no objection, we will propose your marriage with her."

King Ravichandra had heard much about Princess Kanakasundari. He had no objection to the minister's proposal.

King Jaipal of Somagarh was pleasantly surprised to receive the proposal. He had no doubt about the worthiness of Ravichandra. Somehow the possibility of marital relation with him had not occurred to him.

He asked his daughter's opinion on the proposal.

"Father, were you not preparing to invade Yashwantpur? How did the marriage proposal come up all on a sudden? I feel intrigued about it!" said the princess.

"My child, I planned to invade Yashwantpur because I feared that the young king might be planning to invade our kingdom! But now it is evident that he desires close friendship with us!" said the king.

The princess said thoughtfully, "Father is it not a strange coincidence that the proposal for marriage should come just when you were planning an invasion?"

"The young king has a wise old minister. Maybe, he is at the root of the proposal," said the king.

"Father, my information is, the young king even does not proceed on a hunting expedition without his minister's approval. Since he is so much dependent on his minister, he might some day drive me away at his minister's advice! Please tell him that we will agree to the proposal only if he exiles his minister," said the princess.

King Jaipal sent a message accordingly. That infuriated King Ravichandra. "This is a deliberate insult to us!" he screamed.

"My lord, I am quite old. It is time for me to retire from the business of the state. Please allow me to go away for a peaceful living on one of the small isles under your rule. That should satisfy King Jaipal," the minister pleaded with his master.

"We have no business to please King Jaipal. Who is he or his daughter to dictate to us who should or should not be our minister?"

The young king then called his general and ordered him to



get ready to attack Somagarh. The minister tried to stop him, but failed.

On the third day the army of Yashwantpur reached the frontiers of Somagarh. But before the attack was launched, King Jaipal sent word that he welcomed the proposal for marriage without any condition!

King Ravichandra was delighted. The officer who brought the message was rewarded. At the old minister's advice, the young king went forward and paid his respects to Jaipal.

Soon thereafter, on an auspicious day, the marriage took



place with pomp and show.

The Vampire fell silent for a moment and then asked King Vikram in a challenging tone: "O King! was not the conduct of Princess Kanakasundari quite childish? If she put forth a certain condition for her marriage, why did she withdraw it hurriedly and agree to an unconditional marriage? Was it out of fear? Was it not foolish of her to put forth the condition when she was so timid? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your ability to answer the question, your head would roll off your neck.

King Vikram replied forthwith: "Princess Kanakasundari was extremely intelligent. She

wanted to verify if the king was really guided by his minister in every matter. The king ordering an attack on Somagarh disregarding his minister's opinion in the matter proved that he can take a decision by himself when necessary.

"There was no reason for the princess to fear Ravichandra's army. Somagarh was already prepared for an invasion of Yashwantpur. The army of Yashwantpur had come unprepared. There was every chance of Ravichandra getting defeated if a war ensued."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

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Father and Sons

LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

In one of his earlier lives, the Buddha was the son of a farmer in a village near Benares. His parents named him Kamal. He was brought up with great care and love, specially of the grandfather.

The grandfather was very old and could not therefore take care of himself. The daughter-in-law had to look after all his needs and requirements.

One day, however, she got tired of serving the father-in-law. That evening when her husband returned home, she told him:

"I am quite tired of serving your father! How long can I continue in this manner, after all?"

"We will have to take care of him until his death," replied the farmer. "We cannot kill him,

can we?" said the farmer a bit annoyed.

A few days passed peacefully. But very soon the quarrel came up again and the wife argued, saying, "But what is wrong in letting the old man die? We would be only relieving him from his old-age sufferings! A quick death would be better for him than a slow one."

The farmer resisted for long, but, after a few weeks, he too gave in to his wife's argument. Accordingly they planned a way out of the situation.

One day the farmer told his father:

"Babuji, in order to get a well dug in our land I would like to take a loan from a pawn broker in the neighbouring village. It seems your signature is also required on the documents. So,



please come with me to the village." The old man agreed to go with him.

The next day, as the bullock-cart carrying the grandfather and the farmer began to move, Kamal too jumped into it. He could not be separated from his grandfather.

After an hour's journey, they reached a jungle. The farmer suddenly stopped the cart and jumped down with a spade in his hand. He told his father and son, "You two stay here for a while. I shall return soon." So saying he walked into the jungle.

A few minutes later, Kamal

too took up a spade and followed his father. After a short walk into the jungle he discovered his father who was digging a big pit near a bush. He too started digging a pit nearby.

The farmer looked up and was surprised to see his son. "Kamal, what are you doing here?" he asked. "Why, father! I am digging a pit just as you" replied the son.

The father wondered if his son had come to know his plans. He asked Kamal, "Do you know why I am digging this pit?"

"I do not know. But there cannot be anything wrong in my doing as you do!" replied the son innocently.

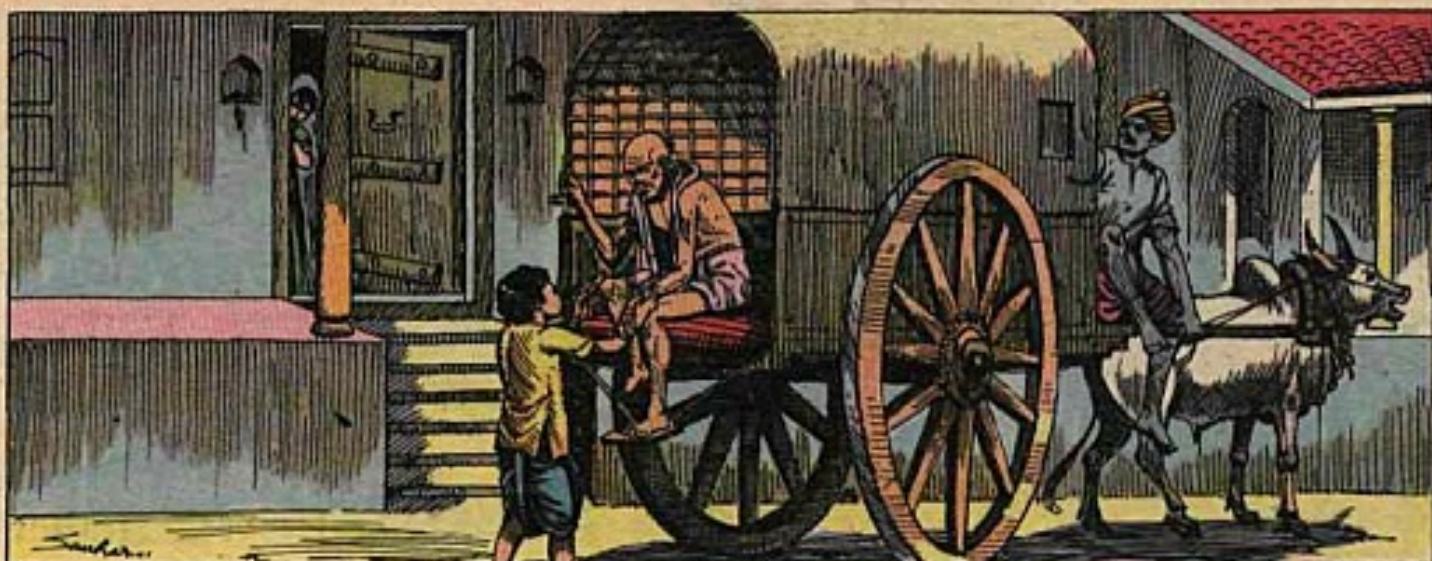
The farmer stood speechless for a moment. Then he decided to take his son into confidence.

"I am digging this pit in order to bury my father. Being his son, it is my duty to perform his last rites when he dies," explained the father.

"But, grandfather is still alive!" replied Kamal.

"But he is in such a condition that death might claim him any moment.

"One might meet one's death any moment. So uncertain is



life! That is why I am digging a pit for my father," replied Kamal. "Being your son, is it not my duty also to take care of your funeral rites?"

These words opened the farmer's eyes. He realised what a heinous crime he was going to commit. He felt remorseful.

He returned home with his son and father. He narrated to his wife all that happened in the jungle.

"O Lord! What cruel times are these! We gave all our love and care to our son and today he

digs a grave for his own father who is well alive! I would hate to see the face of such a son!"

"Had not my father too given me all his love and care? And today was I too not going to do the same thing to him? Kamal has opened my eyes and saved me from a sin. I shall always be me from a sin. I shall be always farmer, with tears in his eyes.

Then onwards, the wife had no more complaints against the grandfather, for she too appreciated the lesson the son imparted. —From the Buddha Jatakas.

A French man boasted before his Italian friend, "Research in dress shows that we the French first invented the cuffs."

"Maybe. But the Italian invented the collar," said the Italian.

An Englishman who was passing by said, "I give credit to both of you for inventing the cuffs, and the collar. We the Englishmen merely added the shirt to the cuffs and the collar."





A CHALLENGE TO GOD

In the quiet village of Devnagar there once lived a devotee named Shivdas. Every evening, people used to gather at his house and listen to his songs in praise of the Lord. Sometimes, he used to talk to them and explain the mystery of the creation. On one occasion he said:

"God is love. He takes care of everything he has created—right from the ant to the biggest animal. Because of his love for his creatures, He wills for each what is best for it. And, each creature carries out only His will."

"If that is so, can the Lord force a man to eat even if he refuses to eat?" questioned the doubting Sudarshan from the audience.

"The Lord does not, however, impose his will on any one," replied Shivdas. "But, if He

really decides to get His will done, nothing or nobody can resist it," continued Shivdas.

Sudarshan was not quite convinced with the answer. He got up and returned to his house. On the way back he took a resolution that he will not eat from then onwards. "Let me see if the Lord can force me to eat. I challenge Him to do so!" he decided, looking at the deity in the village temple.

At home, his wife who was waiting for his return, said, "It is already very late. Come right away for the dinner - please!"

"I am not at all hungry," said a firm Sudarshan.

"Papa, today Mummy has prepared very special dishes. They are your favourite ones. Come!" pleaded his daughter.

Seeing that if he stayed at

home there were all the chances of his being forced to eat, Sudarshan left his house immediately and walked to a nearby wood. He sat there under a banyan tree and soon slept off.

It so happened that that very evening a young girl in Devnagar had been possessed by an evil spirit. An exorcist was called. He uttered some mantras and the girl was free of the spirits. "But, to appease the spirit," advised the exorcist, "you must prepare a potful of thick *payasam* and leave it in the nearby wood tonight."

It was done accordingly. The pot was kept under a tree very close to the banyan tree where Sudarshan was sleeping.

It so happened, that within a short time, a gang of thieves came to the same wood in order to divide their booty. One of them got the smell of the *payasam* and he ran towards it.

"Stop!" shouted the Chief. "You fool, must you be in such a hurry? Don't suspect that this *payasam* might have been poisoned and kept here on purpose? If we die, then all our booty will be taken away by the fellow who has planned this trick on us!"



"How shall we know if it is really poisoned?" asked the greedy thief.

"First, look around and see if the fellow is hiding himself anywhere!" commanded the chief.

They looked around and soon came upon Sudarshan. They dragged him to the chief accusing him of the plot. The chief ordered him to drink the *payasam*.

"I have taken a vow not to eat anything. I have no intention whatever of killing you. My reasons for not eating are different," pleaded the helpless Sudarshan.

The chief's doubts increased.



He ordered his men to force the *payasam* down Sudarshan's gullet. The men did as ordered. When the thieves saw that nothing had happened to him, they left him free. They enjoyed the remaining *payasam*.

"The Lord has won! Indeed

He has many ways to get His will done if He really decides to do so. Shivdas was right..." Thinking thus, Sudarshan returned home and soon slept off. Before sleeping he thanked the Lord that he did not have to on an empty stomach!

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES





STORY OF INDIA-94

India Wins Freedom

In 1939 a great war broke out in the west and soon it spread to the East. Britain which was believed by many to be invincible, was suddenly confronted by a formidable enemy, Germany. The battles grew ghastly as bombardment became easy with aeroplanes.

The man who unleashed unforeseen violence and brutality was Hitler, the fascist dictator of Germany. At first an ally of Russia, ruled by Stalin, he suddenly attacked Russia. He hated the Jews and massacred millions of them in his own country and countries he conquered.



An Asian power which joined Hitler was Japan. Although the emperor of Japan, Hirohito, was peace-loving, his country was ruled by ambitious politicians and military generals. Germany and Japan had yet another ally. It was Italy under its dictator, Mussolini.



With America joining Britain and other countries against the aggressors, the war became known as the World War II. Gandhiji sympathised with Britain and offered cooperation if India was promised freedom. No such promise came. So he called the British to "Quit India" in August '42. At once the British began arresting and torturing the freedom-fighters.

In the meanwhile Malaya and Singapore, also colonies of Britain, were attacked by the Japanese. The fall of Singapore, the strong British citadel, surprised all. The final victory of Germany and Japan, known as the Axis, over Britain, America and others, known as the Allies, appeared imminent.



Subhas Chandra Bose, an illustrious leader whom the British had detained, escaped to Kabul and then to Germany. He reached Singapore in 1943 and organised Indian soldiers of the defeated British army into a new army of freedom-fighters known as the Indian National Army. He planned to drive the British away from India with the help of the Axis powers.

The Indian National Army or the Azad Hind Fauz soon gathered momentum. Braving great ordeals, the army marched towards India and reached Kohima in Manipur. It could not advance farther because of lack of arms. Japan was also losing ground. Subhas Chandra Bose mysteriously disappeared in August '45.



In the meanwhile Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, had been demanding a separate land for the Muslims to be called Pakistan. Great Indians of the time tried to dissuade him from such a demand, but he persisted in it, with subtle encouragements from the British.

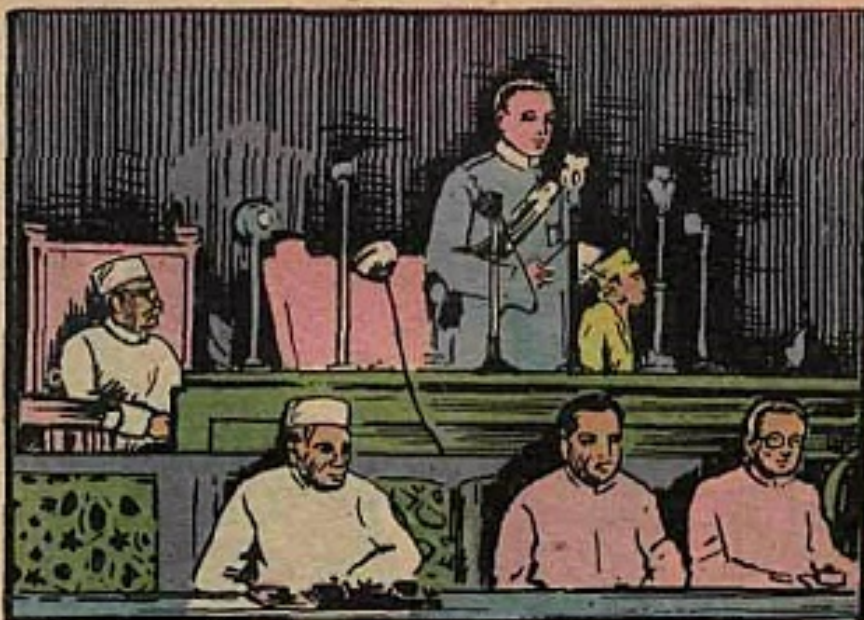
The demand for Pakistan had infused poison into the brotherly relationship between Hindus and Muslims that had prevailed for long. The Muslim League, to assert its demand, called for Direct Action Day on 16 August 1946. Bloody communal riots broke out in Calcutta, Dacca and several other places. Thousands of innocent lives were lost.





Jawaharlal Nehru, the great leader of the freedom movement and a statesman of high order, headed the interim Government in 1946. He did his best to avert the partition of India and persuaded the Muslim League to join his government, but the League refused to give up its demand. India got ready to pay a high price for freedom.

Lord Mountbatten, a famous general in the World War, became India's Governor-General in 1947. After discussions with him, Pandit Nehru broadcast on 3 June 1947 that partition had been accepted by the Indian National Congress. On 15 August 1947 India became independent. The nation rejoiced amidst sorrows.



The Partition left a legacy of tragic events—of communal clashes, refugees and wars. But Indians realise that their strength lies in unity. Together they march forward through hurdles and setbacks towards a glorious future for their land that had a great past.

Story of India ends



A BIRTHDAY GIFT

The horses galloped. Their flying mane and their black shining muscles looked beautiful in the mellowed evening sun. They looked as proud as their master Jayant, seated in an aristocratic coach.

Jayant was in no mood to appreciate the black beauties. He was thinking about his dear wife, and the expensive gift he had bought for her.

That day it was his wife Malini's birthday. He had gone to the city to buy her a birthday present. He had bought for her the most expensive gold necklace. He was riding back home, imagining how happy would be Malini with the gift!

Suddenly, the coach jerked to

a halt. He flew into a rage because his day dreaming was badly-disturbed.

"Kashiram, why have you stopped the coach? You...." questioned Jayant.

"Sorry, sir," Kashiram offered his excuse, "I have halted because of the man standing here. He is my brother-in-law, Sridhar. He says his grandfather is very ill and that the old man may die any moment. He wants to take a lift to our town. Sir, won't you please allow him a lift?" pleaded Kashiram.

Jayant would have turned down the plea but for Kashiram.

"Hop in," he told Sridhar.



"And Kashiram, whip your lazy horses, I want to reach home before dusk," commanded Jayant.

The black horses galloped once again. As the cool fresh breeze blew on his face and played with his long locks, Jayant went down the stairs of his dream-world.

All on a sudden, there was a big crash! When he came out of his shock, Jayant found himself on the road side. His clothes were torn. His dhoti had blood smears—his knees were badly wounded!

The horses were galloping so fast that Kashiram had lost con-

trol over them. He saw a big ditch on the left track of the road, but could not avoid it in time. The horses ran over it, the left wheel got stuck, and the coach overturned.

Kashiram and Sridhar got up quickly and went to the aid of Jayant. They helped him stand up. They put the coach back on the road. They gathered together the strewn luggage, which included the gift box, and put it back in the coach. Driving silently and slowly, the three men reached their destination before it was too dark.

As soon as she saw the coach, Malini came out of the house and said, "Jayant, what have you brought for me? Show me, show me please!"

Jayant felt deeply hurt. It hurt him more than the wounds on his knees. He was pained to see that his wife cared more for her gift than for his injuries. His dreams got shattered!

Malini did not even wait for Jayant's reply. As he stood there dumbfounded, she snatched the gift box from the coach and ran into the house.

Jayant sat on the verandah, all cast down. Just then, his wife dashed into the verandah and

threw open the gift box in front of him.

"What is this silly joke? Is this empty box my birthday gift?" shouted an angry Malini.

Jayant forgot his own personal sorrow when he realised the great loss. He jumped from his seat, marched to Kashiram's house and screamed at him:

"Kashiram! Where is your cheat of a brother-in-law? Is this the way to repay me for giving him a lift?"

"What has happened, sir? Please tell me in detail. I shall myself punish him if he has done you any harm." said Kashiram, taken aback.

"Sridhar has stolen my gold necklace! He must have done the mischief when my box was thrown off the coach in the accident! By tomorrow morning you must bring back the necklace or else you and your brother-in-law, both will be thrown in the jail," roared Jayant and went away in a huff.

Kashiram dropped to his knees. He was shocked beyond words. When he regained a little, he strode towards his own house. He met his wife near the door step.



"Where is your brother? He is a real cheat and a thief. He told me that your grandfather is critically ill and that he..." a shocked Kashiram was taking out his anger on his wife.

"What do you say? My grandfather is ill? No one even told me about it! Oh my God!" interrupted the surprised wife. She did not bother to hear the rest of Kashiram's accusations of her brother. She rushed out of the house and went toward her grandfather's residence.

Next morning, Jayant walked up and down the verandah waiting for Kashiram. A little later he saw Malini coming toward



him.

"Pardon me my impatience, Jayant. Yesterday I have been very rude to you. All through the night I have thought over my rude behaviour. I should have marked that you were wounded. A friend of mine saw you limping and drew my attention to it. Then I enquired of Kashiram and learnt of the accident. I don't care if the necklace is stolen. You are my precious gift. You must get well soon," she sobbed out her repentance.

Jayant felt relieved and happy. Instead of giving a gift he had received a birthday gift from his wife, he thought.

Just then, he noticed a gentleman entering his compound. It was the jeweller from whom he had bought the necklace.

"Pardon me, sir," the jeweller stammered out. "Yesterday, there has been a grave mistake on my part. While packing up your gift, my salesman gave you by oversight an empty box. As you were in a hurry to return, you did not even mark the difference! Here is your necklace, sir!"

Malini was overjoyed with the elegant necklace. But Jayant felt happy for a moment only. He was sad that he had hastily accused Sridhar of the theft. He decided to compensate Sridhar.

Just then Kashiram appeared before him.

"Kashiram, I'm sorry to have accused Sridhar of theft. The necklace had been left by mistake in the jeweller's shop, you know!" said Jayant.

"But, sir, had you not suspected him, I would not have taken my wife to task on account of her brother's conduct. I had otherwise no intention of informing her of her grandfather's health. However, on hearing the news she rushed to the old man's house and



attended upon him before he breathed his last. The result is, the old man was happy with her and left her a fortune!" said a beaming Kashiram.

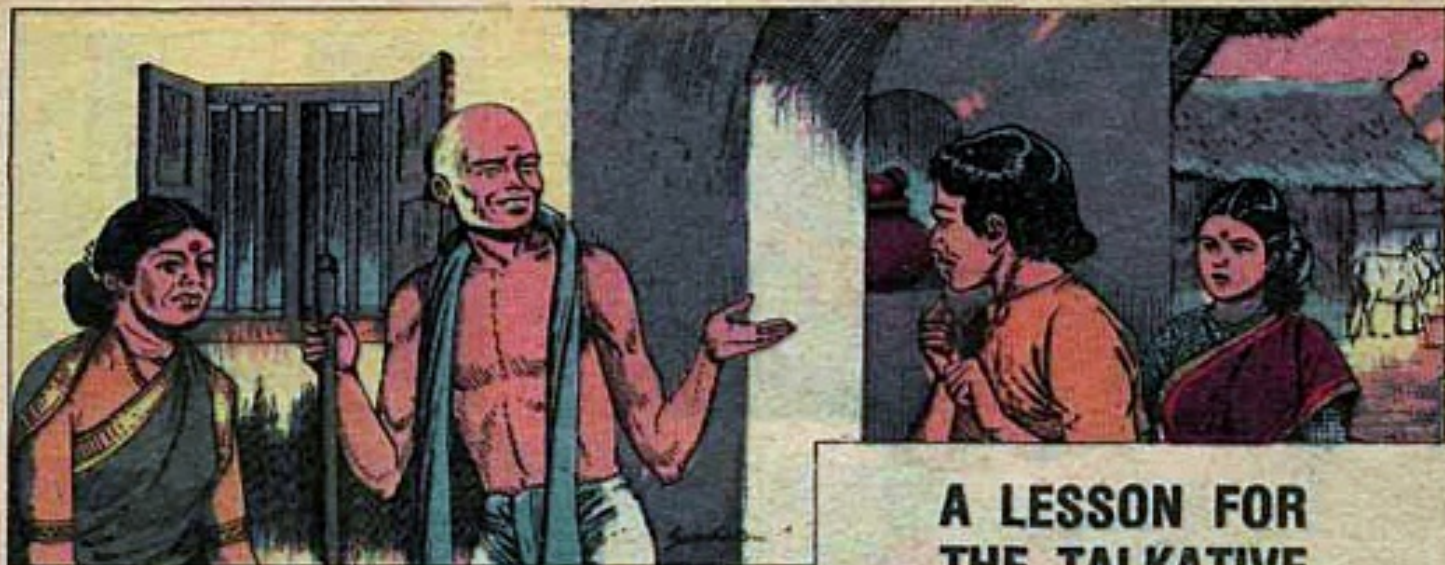
"Is that so?"

"Yes, sir, five thousand rupees!"

"Good. Malini's birthday has indeed proved auspicious for all of us!" commented a joyous Jayant.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





A LESSON FOR THE TALKATIVE

Amal was a bright boy. But he did not like to study during the long summer vacation. He loved to play. Even his grandfather Shambhunath's stories could not keep him away from his games.

However, it must be said that grandfather Shambhunath loved to tell stories—it was almost his passion. He never cared to know if his stories were interesting or not for others. He needed someone to listen to him—that was his true interest in wanting to keep Amal at home. He did not realise that he was a dull story-teller.

Having failed to attract Amal to his story-telling, he called, one day, his wife, his son and his daughter-in-law and asked them, "I would like to know why Amal is not interested in my stories. Are not my stories

interesting?"

But the son and daughter-in-law did not want to hurt the feelings of the old man. So, the son replied, "Father, your stories are extremely interesting. If we had time we would have ourselves listened to your wonderful stories. I don't know why Amal loses his patience!"

Shambhu felt happy to get new candidates for his story-telling sessions. He told them, "I will be very glad to tell you stories. Of course I'll tell them at such times when you have leisure. All right?"

They could not tell a "No." They kept quiet. Their silence was taken as consent.

From next day, Shambhu began his harmless assault. He would tell his stories to his wife when she was doing some stitching work; to his daughter-in-



law, when she was cooking mid-day meals; to his son, when he was doing some garden work. After a week's patience, the young couple got tired of Shambhu's stories and they saw that the only way to escape this boredom was to oblige Amal to listen to the old man's stories. So, with threats of food, the parents managed to make Amal sit at home for a while.

This time, grandfather Shambhu made a treaty with Amal. He said, "Amal, I'll tell you only one story per day.

Amal was only too happy with this concession

By and by the length of the

stories increased and Amal became very restless. He came to understand the old man's trick on him. But, as he had given word to stay on till the end of the story, there was no way of escaping. He continued to suffer until...

One day, Amal saw that a new boy had come to the village. His name was Raghu. He was an intelligent and a serious boy. Amal and Raghu soon became good friends.

Raghu got more and more attracted to Amal because Amal used to repeat to him all the stories told to him by his grandfather, of course, in a much better style. One day Raghu asked his friend, "Amal, can I too come to listen to your grandfather's stories?"

Amal was overjoyed. The very next day, he took Raghu to his grandfather and introduced him to the old man, saying, "Grandpa, Raghu is my good friend. He is very interested to listen to your stories. From now on, he will be your listener."

It did not make much difference to Shambhu as to who listened to his stories. So, he welcomed Raghu and told him a favourite story of his.

Once upon a time there lived a beautiful princess named Vibha. She was deeply in love with the neighbouring country's prince Veer Chand. One day a wicked magician stole into the palace and carried away Princess Vibha. He needed to sacrifice a princess for his puja! When Veer Chand came to know of this incident, he himself learnt the secrets of magic and then went to rescue the princess, whom he later married.

Raghu was not happy with this ending of the story. He asked, "But, the wicked magician must have stolen other princesses of other kingdoms as well!"

"It is not our present concern, is it?" replied Shambhu.

"It is our concern," continued Raghu, "because, Prince Veer Chand, being so noble, would not have been happy to save only his beloved Princess, Vibha. Moreover, all his learning would have been wasted if he did not practise them."

Grandfather Shambhu was indeed happy to see Raghu's curiosity and interest in the story. He decided to continue the story.

"Angry at losing Princess



Vibha for his sacrifice, the wicked magician resolved to sacrifice one hundred and one princesses...." After narrating for long, Shambhu concluded the story saying, "After many years of fighting with the magician, and after saving all the endangered princesses, Prince Veer Chand returned to his kingdom."

Raghu had yet another question. "If Prince Veer Chand left the kingdom for so many years, how could Princess Vibha stay back, all alone, for such a long time? She must have left the affairs of the kingdom to her ministers and gone in search of Prince Veer Chand! And, in

such a case, she must have faced lot of dangers and problems on her way—is it not so?”

Grandpa Shambhu again invented, with great strain on himself, a long story narrating the difficulties of Princess Vibha. But, each time Raghu had some questions or doubts and poor Shambhu had to narrate for hours together. Ultimately, he got exhausted and asked Raghu to fetch some water from the kitchen. As soon as Raghu went out of sight, Shambhu got up and escaped from the house.

He walked as fast as his walking stick could take him. People on the way were surprised to see grandfather Shambhu, all nervous and sweating. When Amal heard that his grandfather was running away from the village, he ran and caught up with him.

“Why are you running away like that Grandpa?” he asked.

“Dear child, I remembered some urgent business in the next village. Your friend Raghu won’t leave me easily. He is madly in love with my stories! If you want me to return home, see that Raghu is not there.”

Amal readily promised that Raghu would never again be asked to come home as he disturbed grandfather’s work!

Grandfather Shambhu realised that even story telling could be a punishment if it is forced upon some one. He learnt his lesson.

Grandfather Shambhu and Amal returned home with happy smiles on their faces.

Next day Raghu told Amal with a twinkle in his eyes, “I hope, you can now devote more time to play with me!”

“Yes, yes, thanks a lot!” said Amal. Both burst into a hearty laugh.



Of Messrs And Sir

"Grandpa, when I grow up I will launch a publishing house with you as its advisor. I will name it Messrs Chowdhury, Rajesh and Co!" said a happy Rajesh.

"Won't you take me as a partner?" asked Reena.

"Why not? We can call the firm Messrs Chowdhury, Rajesh, Reena and Co!"

"I'm afraid, Rajesh, you can't add *Messrs* to the company's name once Reena is in," observed Grandpa Chowdhury.

"Why not?"

"*Messrs* is a short form of *Messieurs* which is the plural of *Monsieur* in French. *Mister* is the English equivalent of *Monsieur*. With Reena's name in the Company, can you add to it the plural of *Mister*?"

"I withdraw myself from the future company. Rajesh is quite taken up by the term *Messrs* and let him have it by all means. Now I must rush to my college. There will be a talk on the life of Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer. Did you know Sir Iyer personally grandpa?" asked Reena.

"I did. Well, Reena, you cannot say Sir Iyer. You must say Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer or just Sir C.P. It is because Sir is a prefix to the personal name, not to the surname."

"Thank God, you told me before I have met someone who is knighted. I would have made an awful faux pas!"



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



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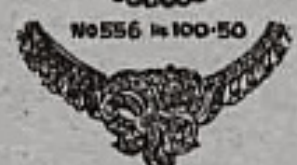
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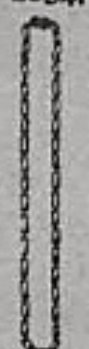
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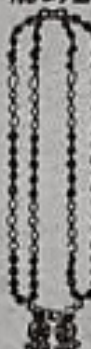
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